

C.P. Nichols

Sediment of
Lake Metapedia



LAKE METAPEDIA, FROM McGREEVY'S QUARRY.

P. W. ANDERSON.

PHOTO, TORONTO

THE SEIGNIORY
OF
LAKE METAPEDIA.

A DESCRIPTION.

— BY

RICHARDSON, BRADLEY & LUMSDEN,

Official Reporters,

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TO

GEORGE LAIDLAW, Esq.,

PRESIDENT OF THE CREDIT VALLEY RAILWAY COMPANY,

TORONTO.

DEAR SIR,

The accompanying description of the Seigniory of Lake Metapedia—a beautiful and valuable country, hitherto too little known—is, at your request, submitted by

DEAR SIR,

Yours faithfully,

RICHARDSON, BRADLEY & LUMSDEN,

Chief Reporters to the

House of Commons of Canada.

TORONTO, 1877.

PHOTO. TORONTO.

METAPEDIA LAKE HOUSE AND BROCHU'S MOUNTAIN—HEAD OF LAKE.

R. W. ANDERSON.



THE SEIGNIORY OF LAKE METAPEDIA.

The Intercolonial Railway of Canada, connecting the Grand Trunk Railway at Rivière du Loup with its Ocean termini at Halifax and St. John, passes for a large portion of its length through a country, which, however picturesque its aspect, is likely to remain forever almost wholly unremunerative. Lofty mountains and rocky ravines, hills whose sides have been denuded of their once luxuriant foliage and valuable timber by oft-repeated bush fires, which have driven away even the game which might otherwise tempt the ardour of the sportsman, shallow river beds and barren tracts of land meet the eye on every side, and offer an inducement to loiter to none but the eager fisherman or the enthusiastic admirer of nature in her grander moods. An exception to the rule, however, is to be found in a district commencing some miles to the east of the height of land and continuing to the entrance of the Metapedia Valley. At this great elevation above the sea level is a plateau or table-land of considerable extent, which has been singularly favoured, and comprises within itself innumerable sources of wealth. The hunter and the agriculturist, the fisherman, the lumberman, the tourist, the stock-raiser, the quarryman, the lime-burner, and many other classes may here find excellent sport, good timber, the best arable and grazing land, limestone of the first quality, lakes and rivers of great beauty and inexhaustible wealth of fish, islands suitable for summer residences, excellent water power, and easy communication either with the sea or with other portions of the country.

The greater part of this favoured land lies within the Seigniory of Lake Metapedia, which is situated in the county of Rimouski in the Province of Quebec. The *chef lieu* of this county is Rimouski, a town picturesquely situated on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, almost within sight of Father Point. It is at this port that the Ocean steamers, bound for Montreal or Liverpool, have, since the opening of the Intercolonial Railway, called to receive or land the European mails, which are thence forwarded to the west and east with great expedition. The Seigniory of Lake Metapedia is only about 40 miles to the east of this important port, and 60 miles west of Campbellton, a considerable town near the mouth of the River Restigouche, and having direct communication with the Atlantic by the Baie des Chaleurs.

The traveller, after leaving Rimouski, is for an hour or two carried through a bold and mountainous country, until he approaches Lake Metapedia, when the improved character of the land and the timber is at once discernible, and in a short time he gazes with delight on that beautiful sheet of water, glistening in the rays of the midday sun, surrounded by the dark green of the forest, dotted with clustering islands of a lighter hue, and backed by hills which require but the



R. W. ANDERSON

OLD MILL-DAM ON THE ST. PIERRE.

PHOTO. TORONTO

stroke of the axe and the tiller's plough to transform their sombre aspect into a smiling picture of cultivated lands, adorned with homesteads and alive with cattle. This lake, until lately unknown to the tourist, and even yet visited by few and explored by almost none, offers truly a magnificent spectacle to the view. Timber-clad heights and fertile valleys, brawling rivulets, deep bays, and green islands resting on the bosom of the placid waters, combine to form a panorama of unsurpassed beauty. The gorgeous sunrises and sunsets of this high latitude throw a purple haze over the dark hills and a golden sheen athwart the water, broken only by the shadows of the tall cedars which fringe the shore, or the islands which diversify the picture. The joyous notes of the birds and the musicalplash of the waves unite in a harmonious anthem and call for human admiration of a scene so seldom beheld by man, since the aboriginal tribes roamed the forest and levied contributions on the denizens alike of the mountain and the lake.

Nor is the beauty of the scene the only attraction. To the utilitarian and the sportsman, as much as to the artist, this rich country offers tempting baits. The most ardent disciple of Walton can find abundant fish in the lake and its tributary rivers, while the encircling woods shelter every species of game, from the timid hare or innocent partridge to the vicious black bear, whose pursuit would be worthy of the most adventurous hunter. The lumberman, the pioneer of settlement, while increasing his wealth by levelling these hitherto uninjured forests, would confer a benefit upon his country in preparing the fertile land for the toil of the husbandman, whom plenteous crops and increasing herds would well repay. Wild fruit grows apace where the land does not yield more hardy products, and profit would attend the adventure in this district of those who, in modern days, preserve the summer fruit for winter's use. Stone exists in quantities sufficient to invite the quarryman, and valuable lime can with ease be procured. Nature has provided in the rushing waters of the rivers, with their frequent cataracts and rapids, a means whereby machinery can be moved to prepare the raw material for the markets of the world, and men and money are alone required to convert this section, now supine and almost entirely unproductive, into a prosperous, wealth-producing settlement.

HISTORY OF THE TITLE.

The Seigniory was first granted by the King of France, in the 17th century, to one Nicolas Damour, in whose family it remained for a considerable period. At length, however,—though by what means is not very clear—it passed into the possession of Jean Baptiste Raymond of La Tortue, and from that point the record is without a flaw. On the 3rd August, 1797, the property was sold by the Sheriff of the District of Quebec, at the suit of John McKinlay, of Montreal, merchant, against Raymond, and was purchased by Patrick Langan of Montreal, for the sum of £265 currency. The Sheriff's title bears date Sept. 26th, 1797, and contains some interesting details. The principal portions are appended:—

“ This Indenture, made the 26th day of September, in the year of our Lord 1797, between James Shephard, Esq., Sheriff of the District of Quebec, in the Province of Lower Canada, of the one part, and Patrick Langan, of the City and District of Montreal, Esquire, of the other part.

“ Whereas His Majesty's writ of execution, bearing date the 13th day of

March last, issued out of the Court of King's Bench, holding Civil Pleas in and for the District of Montreal, at the suit of John McKindlay Esq., of Montreal, merchant, against the goods and chattels, lands and tenements of Jean Baptiste Raymond, of the parish of La Tortue, in the said District of Montreal, merchant, directed to the Sheriff of the District of Quebec ; * * * in virtue whereof the said Sheriff did seize into his hands, and take in execution as belonging to the said J. B. Raymond, a lake formerly called Madapegnia, now Madapediac, situate at about ten leagues from Mattenne, in the District of Quebec ; which lake empties itself into the River Ristigouche ; with a league of land all round the said lake, together with all the Islands, Islettes, which are in the said lake, granted by title of a fief and seigneurie, haute moyenne et basse justice, and right of fishing, hunting, and trading with the Indians ;

"And whereas the said Sheriff * * * did cause the same to be advertised according to law to be sold and adjudged to the highest bidder at the Court House in the City of Quebec, on Thursday, the 3rd day of August last, * * and the said premises being then put up to sale in the usual manner in the place aforesaid, the said Patrick Langan, being the last and highest bidder, became the purchaser thereof at the price of £265, current money of the said Province of Lower Canada ;

"Now, in order to convey the said premises, and to confirm the purchase thereof to the said Patrick Langan, his heirs and assigns,

"This Indenture witnesseth that the said Sheriff * * * hath granted, bargained and sold * * * to the said Patrick Langan the said lake, with its dependencies as before described, and appurtenances thereunto belonging, and also all and singular the right, title, interest, property, claim and claims whatsoever of him the said Sheriff of, in, and to the same, and every part and parcel thereof, * * * under such rents, duties and seroins as the said premises are subject to.

"In witness whereof," &c.

Then follows the receipt of Henry Caldwell, Receiver-General, dated Sept. 30th, 1797, for £35 6s. 8d., "the quint due on the capital of £265 currency, the price of this purchase, having remitted one-third as customary."

On the 19th January, 1855, letters patent were issued under the Great Seal of Canada granting commutation of tenure of the property, and apportioning the whole into nine equal undivided shares. By deeds dated January 26th, 1855, and executed by the heirs of Patrick Langan, the property passed into the hands of Alfred Gill, of Hartford, Conn., by whom, on the same date, 10,000 acres, or one-ninth of the whole, were deeded to Samuel E. Crocker, of Boston, in trust for the heirs of the late D. Stephen Cummings, and one-tenth of the remainder to Cortland Starr, of New London, Conn. By deeds dated June 12th, 1857, Starr and Crocker re-transferred their interest to Gill, who, on the 25th August, deeded the whole to George M. Bartholomew, of Hartford, father of the present holder. All the considerations paid in these later transactions were nominal (\$1 or \$2) except in the case of the conveyance by Crocker to Gill, for which the latter paid \$5,000. A transfer of the property was made by George M. Bartholomew to Holbrook, of Hartford. A lawsuit was taken against the latter, the property was sold by the Sheriff, and purchased by George W. Bartholomew, son of Geo. M., who now holds the title. It appears that, in 1860, one Alexander Knapp negotiated with Bartholomew, sen., in reference to the pur-



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MOUTH OF RIVER ST. PIERRE.

PHOTO. TORONTO.

chase of the property, and an agreement was arrived at by which a certain amount of money was to be paid over, but, when the time arrived to sign the documents, Knapp said he had no money, his funds being in England. Bartholomew sent the papers to his bankers in London to be handed to Knapp whenever the money was deposited, but, though he endeavoured to raise money on the property, and apparently partially succeeded, Knapp never deposited a cent. On the 23rd April, 1872, he sold to one C. M. Cameron, for the sum of £2,880 stg., a lot of three miles frontage, from the eastern or southern end of the Seigniory, running up stream, by one mile in depth. Since that time Knapp has disappeared. Cameron for some time endeavoured to secure possession of his purchase, but finally gave it up as a bad job. The sale to Holbrook, and the subsequent suit and resale were for the purpose of having the pretenders set aside. A petition was filed, and they were accordingly set aside. Bartholomew had originally taken the property from Gill in satisfaction of a debt, paying only a nominal consideration at the time of the transfer. The tenure, having been commuted, is now free in common socage. In order to obtain the commutation of the old seigneurial tenure, under which Americans could not have purchased, the property had to be surrendered to the Government by deed. The surrender was effected in 1832, but it was not until 1855 that the matter was settled by the issue of letters patent commuting the tenure.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

As described in the Langan title-deed of 1797, the Seigniory of Lake Metapedia consists of the Lake itself, "with a league of land all round the said Lake, together with all the Islands, Islettes, which are in the said Lake." The spelling of the name varies. It appears formerly to have been Madapegnia, and then Madapediac. Now it is indifferently spelled Matapediac, Matapedia, Metapediac and Metapedia, which last, being most generally in use, is adopted here.

Lake Metapedia runs from North-west to South-east, is about 14 miles long, and 4 miles wide at the broadest part; it is fed by numerous streams, the principal being the Mattanne, St. Pierre (formerly Nemtaye), and Awantjish or Sayabec Rivers, and empties itself by the Metapedia River into the Restigouche, with which it flows into the Baie des Chaleurs, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. It is studded with islands varying in size from one remarkable rock adorned with a single tree, to those a mile in length, well wooded and fertile. About the middle of the Lake is a cluster of very fine islands, affording views as picturesque as any to be found among the famed Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence.

The boundary of the Seigniory, three miles distant from the Lake shore on every side, has been properly surveyed, and the actual limits are accurately laid down on a plan, certified by the Commissioner of Crown Lands of the Province of Quebec. The lots are to be laid out in three ranges, each lot having 3 arpents frontage, by one mile depth, or 84 arps. to a lot. The first range on the south has been surveyed and staked out ready for settlement. Although described in one of the later documents as containing 90,000 acres of land, English superficial measure, the Seigniory does not in fact comprise more than from 70,000 to 75,000 arpents of land, excluding, of course, the area of the Lake. The quantity of land staked out is about one-fifth of the whole.

On the north and east of the Lake the land is hilly, and in some places even mountainous; but at the summit a fine plateau is reached, consisting of magnificent arable and grazing land, stretching back beyond the boundary of the Seigniory. On the south or west shore the land lies lower, but is in no way inferior. A few settlers are scattered along the southern half of the Seigniory, but they are merely squatters. Not one of them has a title, and but one a prescriptive right to possession. This is Madame Brochu, widow of Pierre Brochu, the pioneer settler of the Seigniory, from whom the River St. Pierre, Brochu's Mountain, and other points, are named. The Brochus have been in occupation of their land for more than forty years, and, as a holding of thirty-six years gives a prescriptive right to the land cleared at the end of that time, they are now legally locatees of some 400 arpents.

In addition to Lake Metapedia itself, numerous smaller lakes, abounding in fish, are within the bounds of the Seigniory, and no less than fourteen are within easy reach of the north-west end, though some of these lie outside the seigneurial limits. Springs of excellent water are found everywhere, and from some of them the Intercolonial express trains frequently replenish the cisterns of their passenger cars. Some persons are sanguine enough to anticipate a discovery of the precious metals in this region, and a party of Americans have recently been prospecting for gold in the neighbourhood. Without, however, taking into account any possible discoveries or prospective additions to the value of the district, its present unmistakable advantages are sufficient to justify its attracting general attention. No longer remote from the centres of commerce, since the railway has brought it within its magic circle, teeming with wealth which but awaits development, the Seigniory of Lake Metapedia must soon inevitably fulfil its destiny, and give to mankind the treasures so long hidden in the womb of the fecund Earth.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

The riches of any particular country or section of a country are, however, of little interest or advantage to the world at large unless means exist or are created by which they can be conveyed to other districts, and exchanged for their productions. Direct communication by rail or water is the demand of the age, and in both respects the demand is answered in this Seigniory. That great civilizer—the railway locomotive—daily shrieks and rumbles throughout its entire distance and along the borders of its lovely lake, and pauses at no less than three stations within its limits. Sayabec, about 47 miles east of Rimouski, is in a direct line about three-quarters of a mile from the north-west end of the lake at Brochu's (already alluded to), though the designers of the old road through the woods made it about a quarter of a mile longer by unnecessary curves. This old road runs from end to end of the property, and, though in places somewhat overgrown with brushwood and difficult to penetrate, possesses a romantic and picturesque charm which cannot be attributed to more modern highways. The vista of overhanging branches, the occasional glimpse of the lake through the dense wood, the hazardous bridges over the rivers, the game starting up at the feet of the traveller, tall ferns and delicate flowers resembling daisies springing at the side of the path, make a stroll along the turf lane—cool in the midst of summer—a pleasure-trip of itself.



R. W. ANDERSON.

PHOTO. TORONTO

GOVERNMENT ROAD BRIDGE AND WATER POWER—RIVER St. PIERRE.

About five miles from Sayabec Station, the Intercolonial Railway approaches the shore of the lake, along which it runs for the remainder of its length. Two miles further on is Cedar Hall Station and settlement, the name being derived from the abundance of cedars at this spot. Not only is the timber here of excellent quality, however, for the land is more than usually fertile, and there is a quarry of very fine limestone close to the water. For seven miles more the railway coasts the lake, and at eight miles from Cedar Hall reaches Amqui, a small settlement adjacent to the Amqui River, which flows into Lake Metapedia near its outlet. Amqui is favourably situated, being surrounded with good land, and not only near the lake, but close to some of the best salmon fishing on the Metapedia River. The railway—the most modern, and the forest-bordered path—the most ancient, are not, however, the only, modes of transit in this Seigniory, which is traversed by a very good gravel road, solidly constructed by the Provincial Government of Quebec. Along this road many tons of stone from the quarries of the Seigniory were conveyed by teams during the construction of the Intercolonial Railway, and it stood the severe test then applied to it.

In addition to the facilities for transport by rail and road are those by water. Lake Metapedia is deep enough to float a large schooner, but near the shores there is a good beach at which small boats can easily land. Near Cedar Hall is a wharf, and there, as at other spots, rafts could be formed of wood, or even loaded with stone and floated down to tide-water. It has already been found possible to get them as far as Millstream, which lies below the most difficult part of the river. Thence the raft could proceed down the Metapedia to its junction with the Restigouche, and by the latter to the Baie des Chaleurs and the Atlantic. In any case, the Seigniory is, by rail, but 60 miles from Campbellton, which has direct communication with the sea, and but 45 miles from Rimouski, where the Allan steamships call both inwards and outwards; and is on the main line between Halifax and Montreal.

LAND.

The land over the whole Seigniory—mountain, island, table-land and plain—is of the very best quality for agricultural purposes, with the exception of a small tract known as Cedar Swamp—though the name must have been given on the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*, for there are no cedars there. Cranberries and other fruit are, however, plentiful. This piece of bad land is only about two miles long by three-quarters of a mile broad, and is the solitary exception which proves the rule. Even the mountains on the north and east are easy of ascent and are neither high nor rocky, but consist almost entirely of good arable and grazing land, while the table-land at their summits is admirably adapted for settlement. The soil on the south shore, especially that towards the eastern end of the Seigniory, from Cedar Hall to Amqui, is equal to any in Canada. Some of the squatters already referred to have settled around these two points, and though, like most French Canadian *habitants*, unused to the improved modes of cultivating the soil, and working on the plan pursued by their ancestors a century ago, the generous earth has a hundred-fold repaid their tardy labour. The clearings there and at other points on the property serve to show what ample returns the skilful husbandman might expect. Grass grows wild in the greatest luxuriance, and the stock-breeder could find no better country in which to raise his beef

for exportation to the European market. There is no country in the world to excel this as a grazing country, and it lies within easy distance of the means of transatlantic transport. Sugar bushes are plentiful in various parts of the domain, sarsaparilla is found in large quantities, and an herb somewhat resembling tea in its flavour, and generally known as Labrador tea, grows on the mountains. Fruit is sufficiently abundant to warrant the establishment of a fruit-canning industry on the property, as cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, black and red cherries, currants and gooseberries grow wild in great profusion.

TIMBER.

The quantity of cedar and spruce on this Seigniory is of almost inexhaustible extent. It is found everywhere, awaiting the inroads of the lumberman and the settler. The cedar is not large, but is of the finest quality. It borders the Lake, extends back to the boundary, caps the mountains, grows on the islands, lines the rivers, shades the roads—in short, is ubiquitous. Untold wealth lies in these vast forests, as yet secure from the devastating flame, and untouched by the lumberman. In scarcely less quantities than cedar is an abundance of valuable spruce; birch, tamarac and maple grow to a somewhat less extent; and on the islands elm and poplar are found. Pine is scarce. The two chief products of the forests—cedar and spruce—exist in such an unlimited degree and are of such magnificent quality as to make ample returns to those who shall clear them from the soil. Nor are the means of preparing the raw material for the market wanting, as there is excellent water power at various parts of the Seigniory. On the River St. Pierre, both at the railway bridge and at the Lake; on the River Mattanne, which enters the Lake on the north side; at Amqui, close to the railway track, and at many other points, mills could easily be worked, and every facility exists for transport. Rafts can be floated down the River Metapedia to salt water, or advantage can be taken of the proximity of the Intercolonial Railway to load cars direct from the mills. Tanneries could also be worked to advantage, as any quantity of bark for the purpose is easily to be obtained. No more suitable country for the operations of the lumberman could, in short, be discovered, and of all prospective inhabitants he is the most required, as the pioneer whom the hardy settler will follow to cultivate the land which he has cleared.

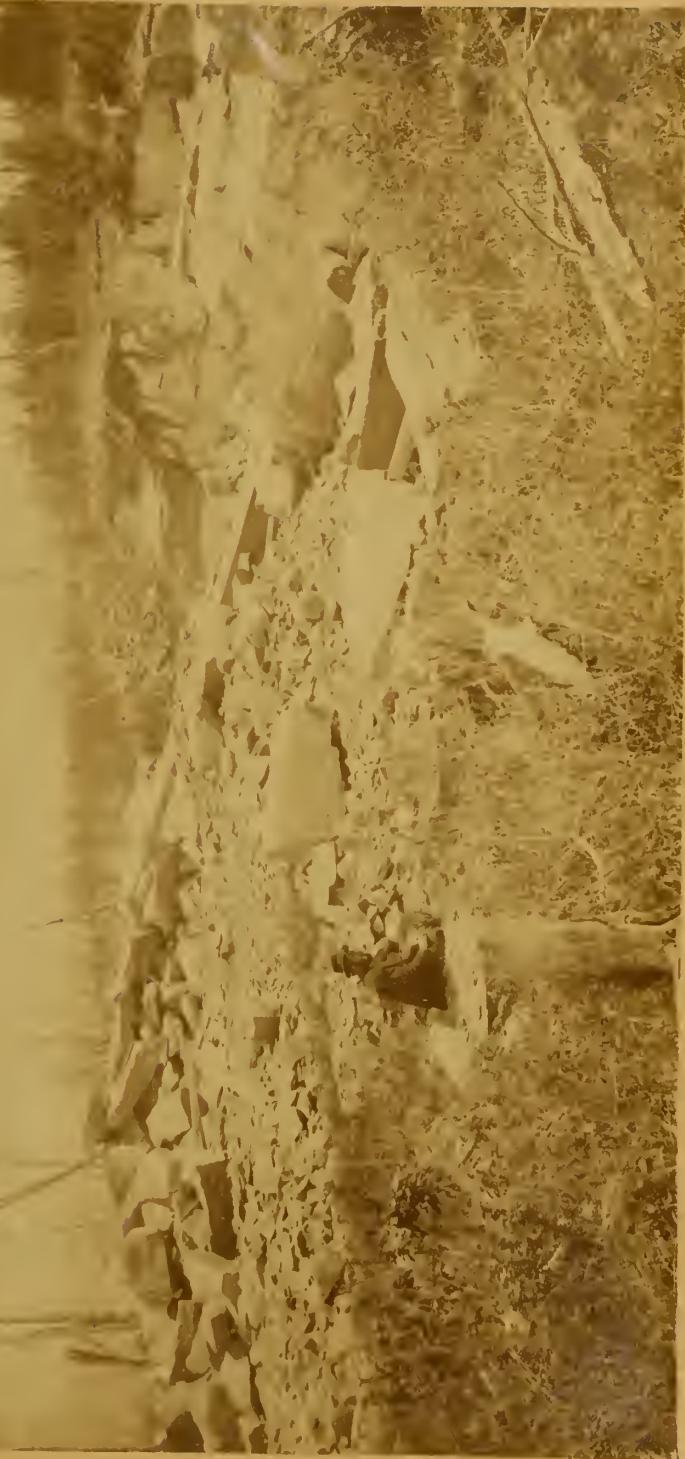
STONE AND LIME.

Good stone, when easily accessible, is of great value. The cities in which stone buildings predominate possess a beauty and solidity which may in vain be looked for in streets of brick or villas of wood. On this estate are several large deposits of limestone of excellent quality, lying ready to hand on the surface in huge blocks. Though not sufficiently extensive to at all interfere with the depth of soil which prevails over the Seigniory, these limestone deposits are large enough to afford ample opportunities for quarrying for years to come. Already a great deal of stone has been taken off the domain for use in the unsurpassed structures of the Intercolonial Railway, but the loss is unappreciable. During the construction of the road, some of the stone was conveyed on rafts down the most difficult portion of the Metapedia River, while still larger quantities were teamed on the Government road. The erection of a few lime-kilns would provide the means

PHOTO. TORONTO

LIMESTONE QUARRY ON THE LAKE SHORE.

R. W. ANDERSON.



for obtaining the choice white lime, which is so valuable for manufacturing and building purposes, and which is produced with ease from the deposits on this property.

FISH.

For sporting purposes, the Seigniory of Lake Metapedia is unrivalled, and both Nimrod and Piscator can here find full contentment. The "cheapest food of man," the delight of the angler, swarms in the rivers and lake to a limitless extent. Though salmon do not come beyond the mouth of the lake, which they are prevented from entering by a growth of rushes at that point, trout of large size and most delicate flavour are abundant, and tuladie are not less plentiful. The latter somewhat resemble trout, but are frequently as large as salmon, ranging in weight from 10lb. or 15lb. to 30lb., or even more. The excitement attendant on landing one of these fresh water monsters is almost as great as that which characterises a struggle with the king of fish himself. They are generally most numerous around the shores of the lake or in the neighbourhood of the islands, while trout are to be found in all parts of the lake and the rivers, and more particularly near the cluster of islands in the middle of the former. These are the principal fish, but various other kinds are frequently met with. Eels are plentiful and carp are found in considerable numbers. To the lover of the gentle art, Lake Metapedia, with its tributary streams and surrounding lakes, affords a charming retreat.

GAME.

For the adventurous sportsman, there is no finer country in the world than that which lies within this Seigniory. Devastating fires in many of the territories surrounding it have driven the game to seek a shelter within its ample bounds, until the woods and mountains may be said to swarm with them. Partridges rise at the feet of the saunterer through the verdant glades, hares challenge pursuit, moose and cariboo roam the mountain-tops, and bears are plentiful. Deer, otter, beaver, sable, mink, wild-cat and fisher are all to be found on the mountains or by the rivers' banks, and wild ducks hover round the Lake. At all times of the year the sport is sufficient to reward the daring hunter, but the true season is the fall, when the hills are alive with game, which till now has been little interfered with.

CONCLUSION.

Here, then, is a magnificent country, forming, as it were, the base of, or key to, the Gaspé Peninsula, which lies between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Baie des Chaleurs, replete with inducements to settlement and manufacture, affording picturesque scenery and unrivalled sport, easily approached, and yet unknown to the crowd. While no section could be better adapted for the location of summer residences or shooting-boxes, for pleasure seekers or artists, it is equally enticing to the humble, hard-working farmer, or the practical, enterprising lumberman. Few spots have been more favoured by heaven, still fewer less frequented by men, till the iron horse, ploughing its civilizing track through a country heretofore remote, brought within the traveller's reach a land of beauty and of promise, long given over to comparative solitude, but destined to blossom as the rose and to send its products to the markets of the world.

